

INSTITUTIONS SCOLAIRES ET ACCES A L'ECOLE EN AFRIQUE SUBSAHARIENNE.

This thesis analyses some of the challenges faced by developing countries on their way to universal primary education. The first of its three chapters give an insight on the political economy of the allocation of public goods in developing countries, studying the case of Ghana. The second one studies the relationship between grade repetition and school dropout in Senegal. The last chapter studies the relationship between Koranic and formal enrolment in Senegal.

The Allocation of Public Goods and National Elections in Ghana This chapter analyses how political concerns affect the allocation of public goods. It studies Ghana over the 1998-2003 period, which includes a democratic shift. A panel of 110 Ghanaian districts is built from nationally representative household surveys and the results of two elections. Most empirical political economics papers find that public funds target ruling party supporters and swing districts. Our results suggest that the opposite used to be true in Ghana. We observe that, when the NDC was in power (with Jerry Rawlings as President), pro-NDC districts received fewer public goods. We posit that this finding is partially driven by a sense of need to curry favour with opposition politicians since, in addition to pursuing its electoral objectives, the government wants to govern a peaceful country. Our analysis also shows that, when controlling for votes and other covariates (including wealth, urbanisation and density), ethnic variables have no impact on public goods allocation.

Is grade repetition one of the causes of early school dropout ? Evidence from Senegalese primary schools. This chapter investigates the connection between grade repetition and school dropout. Household data is matched against a panel of academic test scores and the school career of each child inferred from the combined dataset. This paper uses two original identification strategies to identify the effect of grade repetition on school dropout. The first instrumental strategy uses the differences among teacher attitude to repetition as an instrument for grade repetition. The second strategy uses the discontinuity in the probability of grade repetition between pupils whose test score is just lower and just higher than the target achievement. Both results show a negative effect of the grade repetition decision on the probability of being enrolled at school the next year.

Koranic Schools in Senegal : An actual barrier to formal education ? State education systems in Sahelian countries do not teach religious education, which is provided by the informal sector. This article is a first attempt to quantitatively study how this dual educational system works and whether the potential competition between both systems is a key factor behind low primary school enrolment in Senegal. The analysis is based on a unique national dataset covering 1,800 households, with detailed information on formal and Koranic schooling of 5 to 21 year-old children. In our sample, over half of the girls and 60% of the boys attend a Koranic school for at least one year, although most of them stay for only two to three years. We present a brief background on Islam and Koranic schools in Senegal to provide a better understanding of the complexity of the subject. We then examine the determinants of Koranic schooling before going on to analyze its compatibility with formal schooling. A descriptive analysis shows that children who attend Koranic school for a few years have a higher probability of attending formal primary school than those who do not go to Koranic school at all and those with long lengths of Koranic studies. So as to identify the substitution between Koranic schools and formal school, we use an instrumental strategy based on the opening of formal schools. Our I.V. estimation show that substitution effect dominate for boys. This substitution probably shows that both school careers are considered as relevant educational choices by some Senegalese households, and that there is competition between formal school enrolment and Koranic education in Senegal.

As the opening of formal school changes the school enrolment decisions, the choice of full time Koranic enrolment is probably partly due to the poor quality of formal schools. Hence, improving the quality of formal education could actually raise formal school enrolment. The existence of full time Koranic education could therefore be partly a signal indicating the poor quality of the formal school system. It however is probably the case that this existence is also partially based on real preferences for religious education. The preferences of some households for Koranic education could therefore prevent formal primary education even if the quality of formal education is good. Their (hypothetical) existence would raise the question of pedagogic systems making it easier for families to find a balance between the two types of education.